

FAMILY COHESION AND THE DEGREE
OF AUTONOMY
IN EARLY AND MIDDLE ADOLESCENTS

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DEDICATION

To all the boys of old Scout Troop 429, but especially Brian, Fred, Gabby, Jeff, Lewis, Lynn, Paul, Richard, Tommy, and Willy.

You not only taught me about the commonalities and the uniqueness of each person's journey through adolescence, but also, you reawakened that adolescent intensity for life that belonged to my own Huck Finn odyssey.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In ancient Greece, Aristotle (1941) summarized adolescence as the time when behavior is not just voluntary as in the child, but is the result of choices as well. Today, adolescence is viewed as a special part of the developmental cycle in which increasing sophistication in choice, judgment, and decision making are ongoing processes from earliest development. An integral part of this process is adolescents' movement to define themselves as separate from the dependent ties of their immediate families (Erikson, 1968).

In Erikson's (1968) terms, development in adolescence includes identifying one's strengths and weaknesses so that one senses a sameness or continuity of the self which is, in fact, one's personal identity. To have an awareness of this personal identity, however, necessitates experiencing oneself as free and unique and as capable of self-responsibility. The gradual emergence of such an awareness is the gradual process of taking over more functions separate from parental influence, that is, a process of becoming autonomous.

However, autonomy can only occur if the adolescent assumes responsibility for taking over those functions (Blos, 1967) and to do so implies "...a sharpened sense of one's distinctness from others, a

heightening of boundaries, and a feeling of self-hood and will" (Josselson, 1980, p.191). The process of becoming autonomous then is the consequence of adolescents' psychologically separating from parents so that there is establishment of increasingly differentiated ego structures. This ego structure is more capable of sifting experience through its own mechanisms and therefore more autonomous. The process of psychological separation is frequently referred to in the literature as individuation, a term introduced to this developmental period by Blos (1962).

The task of the individuation process in early and middle adolescence is an emphasis on breaking with the past rather than worrying about what to do with the sense of autonomy (Kaplan, 1984). Throughout childhood the boundary of the self is diffuse, the child is enmeshed within the parent's boundaries. But in adolescent individuation the experiences of intrinsic (cognitive & biological) and extrinsic factors (family, peers, & authority) are oriented toward the eventual goal of delineating a more definite boundary of the self, a boundary delineated by a sense of identity resulting from a sense of autonomy (Blos, 1962).

Most authors describe the process of autonomy in adolescence as proceeding like a drive state (Blos, 1970; Erikson, 1968; Freud, 1949; Gesell, 1933). This drive like process not only takes place within the family environment, but also, by definition is focused on the family itself. Therefore, the progression of this autonomy process can be frustrated or enhanced by the adolescents' families.

Various authors have noted that some families are very cohesive

and resist any member's attempt to individuate (Ackerman, 1966; Beavers, 1981; Minuchin, 1974; Olson, Sprenkle, & Russell, 1979). These same authors have observed that other families appear to launch their adolescents from the family earlier than they are ready. Systems theory especially has made evident that boundary clarification, the first essential task of adolescence, is not a uniform process, but a process that proceeds only as far as the adolescent's personality characteristics and the family patterns permit. Thus, the degree of or lack of family cohesiveness is an essential factor in studies of adolescent autonomy development.

With the adolescent stage identified almost solely by its major task of becoming autonomous, it is logical to assume that the psychological literature would be teeming with studies addressing the process and issues of this part of ego development. However, in a review of the literature on adolescent autonomy, Rodman and Griffith (1982) state that there is very little research "...on the age at which persons attain a degree of autonomy sufficient to direct their own lives" (p.313). They added that there is even "...surprisingly little research, from a developmental perspective, that investigates the differential effects of parental styles on adolescent autonomy" (p.313).

With regard to research on the adolescent developmental stage, Adelson (1979) stated that "...the established truth about the young consists of fictions designed to serve purposes other than the clear apprehension of reality" (p.33). Rodman and Griffith (1982) concur with Adelson and state that most of the writing on adolescence is

"...impressionistic and commonly held knowledge rather than information based upon empirical research" (p.311).

This dearth of empirical work is especially true in adolescent developmental issues of autonomy within the family context. Very little attention has been paid to empirically exploring the effect of cohesiveness on the adolescent separation and individuation processes. Several studies have examined the effect of family cohesion on other areas such as delinquency (Druckman, 1979), parent-adolescent communication (Lowe, 1982), runaway behavior (Bell, 1982; Russell, 1979), violent adolescents (Madden & Harbin, 1983), and parent-adolescent conflict resolution (Portner, 1981). Most studies on adolescent autonomy only hint at the family context (Cohen, 1980; Goodman, 1967; Greenberger, 1984) and do not directly address nor control for the effects on autonomy of different family patterns. Only Elder's (1962, 1963) studies of autonomy directly addressed a major pattern of family functioning. However, Elder focused on the autocratic, democratic, and permissive styles of parental authority and not on the family's connectedness.

To summarize, little empirical research has been conducted in the area of adolescent autonomy within the context of the family system. Specifically, little has been done in exploring on how different patterns of family cohesiveness effect the development of the adolescent's individuation process.

Statement of the Problem

Theoretically, the literature on adolescent autonomy consistently emphasizes the need for adolescents to clarify and define their psychological boundaries by disengaging to some degree from their families. Much of the literature, however, has yet to address empirically if different patterns of family cohesiveness effect the normal developmental process of the adolescent's attempt to separate and define that sense of a self. This study is designed to answer the following question: Is there a relationship between family cohesion and the degree of autonomy in early and middle adolescents?

Definition of Terms

The following are definitions of terms used in this study.

Adolescence. Adolescence is defined as that period of development after which the biological changes of puberty have begun and extends throughout the teenage years. This time period also coincides with the attainment of formal operations and the beginning of separation from the child's caretakers. The major task of this developmental period is the formation of identity.

Early Adolescence. Early adolescence is defined as the time after puberty has begun and the time when teenagers begin to behaviorally separate from the primary caretakers. During this time, teenagers begin to focus on same sex peer relationships. This time period is defined in this study as those students in their freshmen

year of high school.

Middle Adolescence. Middle adolescence is defined as the time when teenagers are actively participating in adult-like activities and taking on more social roles which are outside the family environment. During this time, teenagers begin to show an active interest in opposite sex relationships. This time period is defined in this study as those students in their senior year of high school.

Adolescent autonomy. Adolescent autonomy is the degree to which an adolescent has established a sense of self with clear boundaries from the family - particularly the parents (Josselson, 1980).

Class. Class, as used in this study, is defined as the high school grade level of the study's participants. This study used participants from the freshmen and senior grades.

Family cohesion. Family cohesion is the emotional bonding that family members have toward one another (Olson, Sprenkle, & Russell, 1979). The facets of this bonding include boundaries, coalitions, time and space, friends, interests, and decision making. Using Olson and his colleague's (1979) terminology, extreme cohesion is termed enmeshed while lack of family cohesion is termed disengaged. The middle levels between enmeshed and disengaged are called connected and separated.

Family satisfaction. Family satisfaction is defined as the amount of congruence between how adolescents perceive their family's pattern of cohesiveness (Perceived cohesion) and how they would like that pattern to be (Ideal cohesion) (Olson & Wilson, 1984).

Significance of the Study

Autonomy is a lifelong developmental process, but adolescence is the first time this process suddenly emerges beyond the family system (Blos, 1967). The need for some families to sabotage this process in order to keep the family system intact creates significant problems sooner or later for both adolescents and their families (Wynne, 1958). Inevitably, family conflicts with adolescent offspring center around some issue of autonomy whether the issue is control, discipline, rules, friends, or values (Nye, 1958). Often these same families in conflict are not fully cognizant of how their patterns and behaviors effect the adolescent's natural yearning to achieve self-reliance (Whitaker & Napier, 1978). Cohesive families especially find this period stressful and may even interpret their adolescent's natural development as rejection or abandonment (Berkowitz, 1979) Such families are likely to inhibit this natural process of autonomy development (Beavers 1981). The literature is practically nonexistent regarding adolescent development in disengaged families. Offspring from these families could have the highest autonomy scores because of being forced to survive independently.

This study should help to empirically clarify if there is a relationship with perceived cohesive family styles on the adolescent's natural developmental strivings for autonomy. Such clarification would be especially useful in therapeutic settings. Furthermore, in designing appropriate counseling interventions, it is essential to understand the relative importance of the dimension of adolescents'

satisfactions with their family's cohesion styles. How much this dimension contributes to the autonomy process could determine whether it is more important to emphasize change in adolescents' satisfactions with their families or the family pattern itself (Lowe, 1982).

Limitations of the Study

The following limitations are inherent in the study.

1. As with any study that relies on self-reports rather than observed behaviors, the present study is subject to the misperceptions, biases, and social desirability factors of the respondents. The particular methodological choice of self-report, then, limits the present study to a biased conception of the family cohesion style in two ways: (a) Adolescents are reporting their perceptions of their family's cohesion style, and (b) only the adolescents and not all family members are reporting on the family's cohesion style. Thus, the present study only addresses the autonomy issue as effected by adolescents' perceptions of their family's style and not as effected by the actual family style.

2. A further limitation of the study is that the sample consisted of volunteers whose parents signed permission for their teenagers to participate in a family study. Thus, the sample population is dependent on those adolescents who took the initiative and on those parents who consented to allow their teenagers to answer questions regarding their family. Such a sample might limit the volunteers to

those who are more autonomous and to families who are capable of opening the family boundaries more easily.

3. Generalization of the study's findings is restricted to adolescents who live in rural areas in one Southwestern state.

Research Hypotheses

Theoretically the autonomy process is intimately related to the family system, so, by definition, autonomy proceeds only as the adolescent separates and individuates in the context of the family system and within the parameters set by the family (Blos, 1962; Josselson, 1980). These parameters may be at one extreme of the cohesion continuum (enmeshed) which does not permit or accept the differentiation of members from the system (Olson, Sprenkle, & Russell, Or, these parameters may be at the other extreme (disengaged) in which the family style is to force differentiation perhaps even before the issue of autonomy is relevant and salient in the adolescent's development (Olson, et. al., 1979). Most families likely express a cohesive style in between the two styles (Olson, et. al., 1979).

Therefore, if autonomy proceeds according to the family's style of cohesiveness, then a family's style would likely predict information about the autonomy process of their adolescent. Thus, hypothesis 1 predicts that (a) family styles of cohesion will effect the degree of autonomy and (b) increasing family cohesion styles will make the adolescent's task of autonomy more difficult. Though the literature does not directly address this issue for adolescents in disengaged

families, the theoretical implications are that such teenagers will have been forced into some degree of autonomy (Stierlin, 1974).

Hypothesis 1. Mean autonomy scores of male and female early adolescents (high school freshmen) and middle adolescents (high school seniors) will vary inversely with the degree of family cohesion.

A major developmental task of adolescence is to define oneself as separate from the dependent ties of the immediate family (Kaplan, 1984). This long process of separation and individuation results in an increasing sense of autonomy (Josselson, 1980). Therefore, as this developmental period proceeds from early to middle adolescence, teenagers should report a greater sense of autonomy.

Hypothesis 2. Male and female students in the middle adolescent stage of development (high school seniors) will have a higher mean autonomy score than those in the early stage of adolescent development (high school freshmen).

Since separation and individuation issues become more salient as adolescence proceeds, families as a system must continue to develop in order to accommodate the teenager's increasing need to be more autonomous (Beavers, 1981). Therefore, families need to become increasingly less cohesive in their style of interactions with teenagers as they proceed through adolescence.

Hypothesis 3. Male and female students in the early stage of adolescence (high school freshmen) will perceive their families as more cohesive than will those in the middle stage of adolescence (high school seniors).

With increasing need for autonomy as adolescence proceeds, teenagers tend to prefer their families to be increasingly accommodating of those needs. The theoretical background of hypothesis 3 regarding family cohesiveness assumes that healthy families do develop to accommodate the teenager's emerging sense of separateness from the family (Olson, Sprenkle, & Russell, 1979). This accommodation is, then, a mutual process between parents and teenagers who actively move the process toward that increasing emergence from the family's earlier tightly cohesive style (Stierlin, 1974).

Hypothesis 4. Male and female students in the middle stage of adolescence (high school seniors) will ideally prefer their families to be less cohesive than those in the early stage of adolescence (high school freshmen).

Family systems develop in response to change occurring within or external to the family system (Minuchin, 1974). From systems theory and developmental theory, it is more likely that families respond to the adolescent issues of autonomy rather than initiate those issues (Stierlin, 1974). Therefore, adolescents must, at some level, apply pressure to the system to accommodate the changes happening within themselves, and in that sense, teenagers tend to develop one step ahead of the family system's ability to accommodate that development. Assuming hypothesis 2 that older adolescents have greater autonomy needs and hypothesis 4 that they will prefer less cohesiveness in their families, hypothesis 5 assumes that these needs will be in greater conflict with the family system's need to maintain equilibrium as autonomy development proceeds.

Hypothesis 5. Male and female students in the middle stage of adolescence (high school seniors) will be less satisfied with their families' present cohesive style than will those in the early stage of adolescence (high school freshmen).

Organization of the Study

The remaining chapters of the study are organized in the following manner. Chapter II contains a review of the theoretical basis for adolescent autonomy and summarizes previous research studies relevant to this area. Chapter III explains the way in which the present study was conducted including a description of the population, and the instruments used to measure autonomy and family cohesion patterns. Chapter IV outlines the findings of the present study and Chapter V discusses the theoretical and practical implications of these findings.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter contains a review of the literature relevant to this study. The chapter will examine autonomy in relation to definition, adolescent development, and family models.

Autonomy

So strongly is the image of autonomy identified with the adolescent stage of development, that Douvan and Adelson (1966) stated in their classic work, The Adolescent Experience, "Anyone who puts his mind to the topic of adolescence will sooner or later find himself leaning on the autonomy concept" (p.125). Greenberger (1984) asked adolescents about their values and found that "...making your own decisions" was the trait that "...perhaps comes as close as one can get to a trait that is universally valued by adolescents in our society" (p.17). Autonomy has, in fact, been a major Western culture concern with the entire developmental life cycle from early years (Erikson, 1968; Freud, 1949; Piaget, 1963) through adult maturity (Bowen, 1978; Loevinger, 1976; Maslow, 1962). Despite the actual label of "autonomy" for specific developmental periods (Erikson, 1950; Loevinger, 1976) the

consensus among developmental theorists is that autonomy is a developmental continuum "... an infinite search rather than an optimal midpoint" (Beavers & Voelleur, 1983, p. 87).

It is in adolescence, however, that the task of becoming autonomous is a societal focus "... with implicit expectations that autonomy be attained during those years" (Rodman & Griffith, 1982, p.312). These implicit expectations are all the more fueled by the attainment of formal operations during this stage. With formal operations, adolescents "...think logically about future and hypothetical people and events...(however, they feel) the world should submit to logical schemes rather than systems of reality" (Wadsworth, 1984, p. 164). As Josselson (1980) states, growing autonomy becomes an existential issue as the young person's "...capacity for freedom coincides with capacity for meaning" and for the first time, the adolescent "...becomes a philosopher" (p.205).

Fromme (1941) stated that freedom is critical to development and Anna Freud (1965) emphasized that fulfillment dependent on external authority is immature. But what is autonomy and how does autonomy proceed during adolescence? Various labels for autonomy have included self-actualization (Maslow, 1962), differentiation (Bowen, 1978), open-mindedness (Rokeach, 1960), competency (White, 1959), and propriate functioning (Allport, 1955).

Schafer (1973) noted that empirically it is known that autonomy occurs and something about why it occurs, but not how it occurs. The last question of "how" is often answered by developmental theorists by viewing autonomy as a drive state. Gesell (1933) viewed the process of

autonomy as a component of growth, a "regulatory mechanism" which provides the "...direction of the growth trend" (p.232). Freud (Hall, 1979) defined autonomy in the context of a drive that is regulated by the ego, a psychological system which allows the developing person to distinguish between fantasy and reality and thus accommodate and "...assert mastery over the environment" (Hall, 1979, p.28). White (1959) defines autonomy in terms of competence and he views this process as the ultimate drive, necessitated by the need to effect control over the environment so that the child gains knowledge and experience which translate into competence.

The goal of this autonomy drive has been defined as "...disengaging from the...subordination of the self to its needs" (Noy, 1979, p.199) and as the ability to "...resist pressures to influence one's thoughts, values and actions" (Rokeach, 1960, p.560). Autonomy is having confidence in one's own values and independence (Elder, 1962) and it is a social and psychological state of self-direction and self-responsibility for one's life (Rodman & Griffith, 1982). This state of self-direction, however, can be achieved only by separating oneself from others which helps to reinforce one as a separate and distinct personality in personal relations. Rank (1945, p. 55) emphasizes the importance of this separation process to the extent of describing separation and individuation as equivalent to life, and "...fear of fusion and dependency" as equivalent to death.

Salmony (1983) defines the autonomous personality as consisting of a tripartite quality made up of thinking (thinking for oneself) judging (evaluating as a spectator) and willing (choosing among alternatives).

Salmony has epitomized ultimate autonomy in the mature individual or, as he calls the "benefic autonomous personality" in the fifteenth century hero, Thomas Moore. Such an individual is "...a blend of all aspects of personality including needs, self interests, pressures, etc., but none are dominant to the capacity for autonomy" (Salmony, 1983, p.656).

Autonomy and Adolescent Development

The autonomy process of separation and individuation finds its initial dramatic expression as the child enters adolescence. Until that period, the child, according to psychodynamic theory, has the three major psychological processes of id, ego, and superego in harmony (Blos, 1979). In these early years before adolescence, the child "...introjects images of the parent so he can replay a memory trace of the parent as he needs" (Josselson, 1980). In this way, the self and nonself (parent) become fused, and making a distinction between the self and the internalized parent becomes difficult. The values of the parents and the social institutions are largely the values of the child, though in the latency period, identification solely with the parents is beginning to widen to include significant others.

Preadolescence brings the onset of puberty with its increase in general tension of the libidinal energy which needs to be discharged. Blos (1979) describes this period as the beginning of unpredictability and uncontrollability of affective responses, with such consequent behaviors as tantrums, bragging, sulking, and lying. Blos (1979)

states that this period also coincides with a loss of responsiveness to parental control as the preadolescent begins to withdraw from the family group, simultaneously entering the peer stage. In boys, this stage usually involves avoidance of the opposite sex including avoiding overinvolvement with the mother, but for girls there is more interest in the opposite sex. According to psychodynamic theory, this is the time for boys when conflicts with the father are at their lowest point while for girls many conflicts arise between mother and daughter (Blos, 1962). However, inconsistencies from the parents in their attitudes about these changes, further disturb the changing parent/child relationship. In fact, this preadolescent period marks a declining identification with the parents as crushes, hero worship, and admirations come to the forefront of the developing person's preoccupations, and peers, particularly for boys, become partners in adventure (Blos, 1970). For the first time, the child's mind is opening to values other than those of the parents.

The psychodynamic theory of adolescence characterizes this early period as one of insecurity when compared to the former state of childhood (Josselson, 1980; Kaplan, 1984). Rebelliousness and excessive mood swings also characterize this period (Moriarty & Toussieng, 1976; Offer, Ostrov, & Howard, 1981). Rosenberg (1979) in a extensive study of adolescent self-concept, found that self-esteem decreases in preadolescence with depression rising throughout this period.

Blos (1979), however emphasizes that the backward progression from calm psychological functioning toward rebellious, insecure behaviors is

actually regression in service of the ego, a "...precondition for progressive development" (p.161). As Blos (1979) states, "...adolescence is the only period in human life during which ego and drive regression constitute obligatory components of normal development" (p.153). Blos (1979) quotes an adolescent's own explanation for this regressive movement: "If you continue to rebel and bump into the world around you often enough, then an outline of yourself gets drawn in your mind. You need that." (p.161). Drawing that outline is that part of the process of autonomy which involves the task of clarifying the boundaries of the self as distinct from others by testing the limits of dependency. Clarifying boundaries defines a sense of who one is.

Blos (1979) defines that part of the self-concept described as the self-image, or the "who am I?", as a concern for "ego loss" (p.159). In early adolescence the teenager begins to separate from the parents and so begins to lose the strength of the introjected parent that had been the focus of the superego. Now the teenager must increasingly rely on the ego rather than the superego, that is, he or she must rely on personal abilities for processing and judging information (Blos, 1962). The fear of the ego loss increases as the developing person enters adolescence. However, at the end of the early adolescence period (around age 14) this self-image suddenly stabilizes (Rosenberg, 1979). Interestingly, Rosenberg's series of studies indicate that the self-image makes a dramatic turnaround as it becomes suddenly unstable again as the early adolescent enters middle adolescence around ages 15 to 16.

The stability of the self-image at the end of early adolescence around age 14 coincides with the approximate time when formal operations in cognitive abilities is coming to its completion (Inhelder & Piaget, 1958). This period also marks the time for a triumphant sense of having said goodbye to childhood (Kaplan, 1984). In this new found sense-of-being, the self-assured 14 year old adolescent uses this new found logic to question parent's values and demands (Wadsworth, 1984) and wishes to be taken seriously as a person (Josselson, 1980). It is also during this final phase of early adolescence that peer conformity and possessiveness in friendships (Blos, 1962) reaches its strongest attachments, displacing further the dependence on parents for affective needs.

Middle adolescence brings on increased physical independence from parents as adolescents take on more ego functions from the parents. The greater likelihood of after school jobs gives a sense of economic freedom and the car enables many to physically leave their families for a time. Shlechter and Gump (1983) found that the car did provide more freedom from parental control and that the most pronounced findings from interviews with teenagers are that driving gives strong "feelings of independence" (p.102). Middle adolescence, then, is the first stage in which developing young people can actually test the boundaries of themselves within the context of adult like behaviors.

This stage includes a dramatic increase of interest in the opposite sex with a preoccupation on self-consciousness and romantic love (Blos, 1962). During this period, the demands for new freedoms are both exhilarating and frightening. The parent/adolescent

relationship begins its most confusing state as middle adolescents seem to try on personalities like clothes and vacillate between rejecting parental controls yet asking for the security of parental anchors (Josselson, 1980). Consequently, self images become increasingly unstable (Rosenberg, 1979) as middle adolescents re-struggle with defining themselves in a world that requires a strong sense of self in order to survive.

It is also during this period of experimentation in the adult world that adolescents begin their greatest struggle with the question "who am I?" as they attempt to find the sense of continuity that marks the "...integration of the individual's self and role-images" (Erikson, 1968, p.211). However, before this sense of continuous, consistent self can be accomplished, the task of defining oneself as independent from the caretakers of childhood entails developing a sense of boundaries of the self. The childhood self was dependent on the caretakers for assurance and self-esteem. The adolescent self gradually takes on greater reliance on personal accomplishments and successes with endeavors and relationships, and in this new egocentrism (Elkind, 1967) the self becomes separated (Bloom, 1964) and individuated (Blos, 1979).

Blos (1967) states that individuation "...implies that the growing person takes responsibility for what he does and who he is rather than putting it on the shoulders of those under who he has grown up" (p.165). Josselson (1980) points out, however, that the individuation process is not a detachment from the parents in the sense of "...psychological distance or of untying his connections to his

parents," but only an attempt to "...clearly see himself." (p.191). She notes that autonomy is the flip side of the individuation coin and as individuation proceeds, autonomy increases. The individuation process, then is not only a part of the life-long process of autonomy, but it has an essential task, psychological boundary clarification within adolescence.

Empirical Investigation of Adolescent Autonomy

Despite the significance of autonomy in adolescent development. the literature is not teeming with empirical studies on the topic. In a review of the literature, Rodman and Griffith (1982) conclude that "...although many social science writers have offered definitions of autonomy, few have investigated the empirical validity of the concept in the lives of the adolescents" (p. 312). Greenberger (1984) states, "...oddly, research on child development has more to say about the development of autonomy than does research in adolescence" (p. 19). Kurtines (1974) explains that autonomy has been relatively ignored because:

Unlike compliance, it (autonomy) has been difficult to operationalize...for example, it is difficult to determine whether a noncompliant act reflects independent or simply antisocial tendencies. (p. 243).

Many studies that explore adolescent autonomy concentrate on late adolescence, particularly college students (Hoffman, 1984; Kurtines, 1974; Kurtines, 1978; Sherman, 1946). Results from studies are

difficult to generalize from college to high school students as noted by Josselson (1980) who warned that high school seniors are often seen as independent in high school studies, but dependent as freshmen in college studies.

One of the earliest reported attempts to objectively measure autonomy in early and middle adolescence was reported by Dimock (1937). Dimock administered a questionnaire developed by McDill (Dimock, 1937) to 175 boys from ages 13 to 16. No validity or reliability data of the inventory were reported. Through intuition, Dimock selected various factors thought to be associated with emancipation of the adolescents from the parents. Correlating these factors with emancipation scores on the McDill questionnaire, Dimock found low but statistically significant correlations among various physical and personality factors. Among the highest coefficients, physical strength and weight correlated positively with high emancipation scores and self-criticism correlated inversely with high emancipation scores. Dimock (1937) interpreted the findings to mean that high emancipation scores were associated with a "...greater sense of personal adequacy" (p.150).

Another study which included an inventory specifically designed to test certain autonomy hypotheses was reported by Goodman (1967). He was concerned with the perception of how conforming or deviant adolescents are to their own norms for behavior and the relevance of this area to the development of autonomy. Autonomy was defined as "...the degree to which the individual follows his own dictates rather than the demands of others" (p.207). A self-administered inventory surveying various adolescent concerns was given to 1303 high school

sophomores, juniors, and seniors. He found that adolescents conformed more to the demands of their parents and peers than to their teachers when in the student role and they conformed more to their peers when in the family member role. For peer role behavior, they conformed more to their parent's demands. Goodman (1967) concluded that adolescents resolve the issue of autonomy by

...deviating from the demands of those most closely involved with them in particular social contexts...(which) decreases the number of persons permitted to control their behavior in any one social situation and provides a measure of integrity and self-esteem in that they are resisting the immediate demands placed on them by that person (p. 209).

Goodman's findings are consistent with the theoretical needs of adolescents to clarify the boundaries of the self.

Cohen (1980) reports a study which, from the perspective of autonomy, reevaluates the data collected by Coleman (1961) who had interviewed 8223 midwestern highschool students at the beginning and at the end of the 1957-1958 school year. The data had included the adolescents' reports of their behaviors, attitudes, and values. Using statistically significant differences between the beginning and the end of the school year as a measure of change, Cohen concluded from the data that a high school student's drive for autonomy generally incorporates

...a growth in behavioral autonomy from the parents, increased emotional autonomy from the friends, and the development of a more grown-up identity through the

increased commission of status offenses which lay claim to adult privileges (eg. smoking, drinking, etc.) (p. 119).

The Goodman (1967) and Cohen (1980) studies show a trend toward continual emotional dependence on parents while maintaining a behavioral autonomy. Josselson (1980) states that the theories stress growth of independence but studies "...find that most adolescents are not that independent" (p.204). This conclusion concurs with Douvan and Adelson (1966) who defined three kinds of autonomy in the results of their national survey. They labeled them "emotional, behavioral, and values autonomy" (p. 130). Emotional autonomy is the

...degree to which the adolescent has been able to advance beyond ambivalent attachments to his parents...(and) is no longer at the behest of unconscious feelings toward them (Douvan & Adelson, 1966, p. 130).

Behavioral autonomy focuses on behavior and decisions while value autonomy "...is the capacity to manage a clarity of vision which permits one to transcend customary structuring of reality" (Douvan & Adelson, 1966, p.130).

Values autonomy does not come close to being achieved until very late adolescence (Douvan & Adelson, 1966). Behavioral autonomy begins early as a means to work through emotional autonomy. Douvan and Adelson (1966) emphasize that the amount of behavioral autonomy is "...less apparent, or if apparent, less important than differences in patterns" (p.131). These authors feel that what an adolescent is free to do or not to do "...tells us more about his parents than about him" (p.131). That is, autonomy as expressed by behavioral independence

reflects the "family milieu" and the "parent's ideology of socialization." (p. 131).

A study that examines autonomy from the perspective of the family was conducted by Elder (1963). He hypothesized that

...autonomy is most common among adolescents of permissive parents who explain their requests and is least characteristic of autocratically reared adolescents who seldom receive explanation concerning rules of conduct (p. 54).

The sample consisted of approximately 10,000 7th and 12th graders from Caucasian unbroken homes. Parent/adolescent interdependence was measured by a seven item inventory taken twice in order to describe each parent separately. From the items, parental power was described as autocratic, democratic or permissive. Autonomy was determined from a questionnaire on emotions and values. Elder found that "...as the power of parents decreases, explanation seems to foster a sense of self-confidence and independence in the child" (p.61). However, explanation was related to decreased autonomy with autocratic parent power.

Findings similar to Elder's (1963) beliefs regarding the impact of family on autonomy development were indicated by a major study conducted by Greenberger (1984) who used a heterogeneous sample of 2,143 11th graders to study psychosocial maturity development. Extensive data was gathered on verbal achievement, parental characteristics and family relations, peer relations, school performance and attitudes toward school. Autonomy was measured by the

personal adequacy scale of the Psychosocial Maturity Inventory (PSM) (Greenberger & Bond, 1975). Autonomy was defined as the "...capacity to function competently as an individual" (p,6) and was operationalized by questions measuring the developmental achievements of self-reliance, work orientation, and identity. All other variables except for verbal achievement and school performance were measured by a lengthy questionnaire constructed for the study. Analysis was done using a pairwise multiple regression design.

The results included the following for boys: (a) Being an eldest child did not correlate significantly with autonomy; (b) Parent's educations and occupational prestige contributed very little of the variance in adolescent autonomy; (c) Boys' involvement with family, school, peers, and community contributed 15% of the variance in their autonomy scores; and (d) Educational characteristics (verbal achievement, grade point average) contributed 16% of the variance in autonomy scores.

Greenberger's (1984) final analyses identified significant family and adolescent predictors of autonomy. She found that parental social participation, more and better family relations, GPA and a higher level of involvement in school significantly predicted autonomy scores. This model of autonomy differed for the girls with only GPA and more and better relations as matching predictors similar to the boys. Greenberger concludes that positive family relations and school achievement are important considerations in the development of autonomy.

The Psychosocial Maturity Inventory was used in another study to

explore the phenomenological aspects of high and low PSM scores for 11th grade boys and girls (Josselson, Greenberger, & McConochie, 1977a; 1977b). The mean autonomy scores for the high scoring boys was 10.3 and for the low scorers it was 7.34. High scoring girls obtained a mean autonomy score of 10.66 with 7.65 for the low scoring girls. The sample consisted of teenagers from Caucasian bluecollar families, two thirds Protestant and one third Catholic in religious composition. Qualitative data from selected high and low scorers was collected in hour long interviews of open-ended questions. A developmental-phenomenological portrait was written on each subject based on a coding analysis of the interview data. The authors report the interview questions, but do not explain their coding system.

The general findings of the study for autonomy in boys are that the high and low maturity boys differed in their patterns. Low maturity boys were peer oriented, reached for independence through rebellion and tested parental limits while paradoxically hoping those limits would be enforced. High maturity boys showed more internalization of parental expectations and were more distant and judicious in their peer relationships. In contrast to the boys, the girls in the study differed less in terms of overt behavior and more in the internal way they regarded themselves and others. The high maturity girls could "...reflectively consider themselves and their growth, the low maturity girls find self-examination too threatening" (p. 163).

From the findings, Josselson, et al. (1977a) also raised a theoretical concern regarding the development of autonomy. They noted

that all the boys experienced a period of negativism and rebellion early in their adolescent years, but the high maturity boys moved away from this style while the low maturity boys maintained it. The authors raised several hypotheses to account for their findings.

...(low maturity boys) are simply experiencing a developmental sequence later than normal...(or) they are stuck in a stage which they are unable to resolve...(or) their earlier histories of development of internal control structure not only necessitate a different pattern of adolescence, but also foreshadows adult problems in self-direction (p. 50).

The theoretical questions Josselson, et al. (1977a) raise may be related to the family context in which that development takes place. The studies reviewed thus far have a common thread that links the results to family concerns. Dimock (1937) is concerned with the interacting personalities of parent and child, Goodman (1967) finds parents are a major referent for adolescent norms in social contexts outside the home, and Cohen (1980) finds more emotional autonomy from friends than parents. Autonomy reflects the "...parental milieu (and the) parental ideology of socialization" (Douvan & Adelson, 1966, p. 131), involves "...more and better family relations" (Greenberger, 1984, p. 29), and "...more internalized parental expectations" (Josselson, et al., 1977a, p. 50). Thus, from the literature on adolescent autonomy a picture is emerging in which the family system as a whole effects adolescent autonomy development.

Adolescent Autonomy and the Family System

Berkowitz (1979) believes that because the family is a system of mutual interactions, the family, in order to survive intact, will counter any moves by one of its members to differentiate out of that system. This conceptualization has been elaborated by Wynne (1958) who describes "pseudomutual" families where independent personal expression is seen as destroying the established system of mutuality. Even in the most functional families such sabotage may be subtle and covert. This sabotage reflects the power of the family system to maintain its connectedness as the adolescent autonomy strivings become reframed as rejection or abandonment of the family (Berkowitz, 1979). Other authors (Haley, 1980; Madanes, 1981; Minuchin, 1974) have emphasized the functional nature of symptomatic behavior in the family as an attempt to keep a family member from changing; change that is often associated with increased autonomy.

Various systems models have been developed which explore the connectedness of a family system and the power or influence of the degree of that connectedness on adolescent autonomy. One such model developed by Stierlin (1974) is a transactional model which attempts to convey the dynamic push and pull of the psychological forces effecting the adolescent-parent individuation process. He emphasized that the autonomy process is a mutual effort between parent and adolescent "...leading to relative independence for both parties, yet...an independence based upon 'mature interdependence'" (p.3).

Stierlin (1974) coined the terms centripetal and centrifugal as

end points on a continuum that describes family connectedness. Centripetal families are inner-oriented and members find it difficult to leave or, as Beavers (1981) states, "...to have a high degree of emotional investment outside the family" (p. 301). Children in such families separate later than the norm because parents in such families "...inhibit children's aggressive efforts at independence, and dependence may be rewarded" (Beavers, 1981, p. 302).

The opposite extreme of the continuum is termed centrifugal by Stierlin (1974). Independence is encouraged in such families since these families are outer-oriented or as, Beavers states, expect satisfactions "...more from the external environment than from within the family" (p. 302).

Stierlin's (1974) system model emerged from his interest in developing a theoretical understanding of adolescent runaway behavior. He is interested in the fact that some adolescents run far, some for only a short period and some, despite extensive family problems, never run away. From his experience with runaways and their families, Stierlin was able to identify a covert transactional background within the parent-adolescent interactions, and it is this background of transactional modes that is the essence of his centripetal/centrifugal continuum.

Of particular interest to the development of autonomy is the complexity of interactional styles made apparent by Stierlin's model. Even families who are not at the extremes of the connectedness continuum limit and qualify the autonomy development of their adolescent members. Those families transmit and delegate to their

children unfinished agendas, or, what Stierlin calls, parent missions. The existence of such intergenerational influences passed down in the form of psychological family traditions have been explored in depth by Boszormenyi-nagyi and Spark (1973), Bowen (1978), and Williamson (1981).

Stierlin's model does not include a picture of healthy functioning regarding the connectedness issue and autonomy development. He states only that an ideal separation process does not seem to be the rule and in fact, such a process is made up of discontinuous episodes of pulls (centripetal) and pushes (Centrifugal) as well as stable moments.

Another model which includes the family connectedness dimension has been constructed by Beavers (1981). His model incorporates Stierlin's centripetal/centrifugal dimension as the family's consistent style, but the model also includes a family competence or adaptability dimension. This adaptability dimension is a continuum that, as Beavers (1981) describes, "...parallels a continuum of individual psychological development, with progressive degrees of autonomy, separation, individuation, and boundary clarity" (p.301).

Beaver's model brings a perspective, unlike Stierlin's model, that incorporates healthy family functioning into the picture. The Beavers model defines healthy families as avoiding either extreme of the connectedness continuum while also simultaneously growing in its ability to adapt and to be flexible. This growing flexibility is influenced by each family member's growing understanding that "...he is different from the others, but also he needs them" (p.302). As Beavers and Voeller (1983) explain, the model allows for the placement of the

family as it develops from a couple to a family with small children to a family with adolescents. For example, adaptive families who have adolescents should be developing more of a centrifugal style than the centripetal style typical for families with younger children. As the families with adolescents grow they should be moving more toward boundary clarification and thus encouraging the separation and individuation process of their adolescent children.

A third model that incorporates the connectedness dimension has been developed by Olson, Sprenkle, and Russell (1979). After a thorough review of the family systems literature, Olson and his colleagues concluded that the major family systems issues clustered around 3 dimensions - cohesion, adaptability, and communication.

What Stierlin (1974) and Beavers (1981) call a centripetal/centrifugal dimension, Olson calls a cohesion dimension. He defines cohesion as the "...emotional bonding that family members have toward one another" (p.70). The cohesion continuum in Olson's model is defined by four levels of connectedness ranging from disengaged (very low) to separated (low to moderate) to connected (moderate to high) to enmeshed (very high). Olson and his colleagues have hypothesized that the central levels are associated with optimal family functioning while the extremes are generally seen as problematic.

Adaptability is a second dimension resulting from Olson's literature review. Family Adaptability is defined "...as the ability of a family system to change its power structure, role relationships and relationship rules in response to situational and developmental

stress" (p.70). Like cohesion, adaptability is also divided into four levels ranging from rigid to structured, to flexible to chaotic. Also like cohesion, the extremes are seen as having lower functioning than the central areas which are considered the most healthy family position.

Because of the curvilinear nature of the cohesion and adaptability dimensions, Olson et al. (1979) call their model a circumplex model with families identified in one of 16 possible combinations of the two dimensions. The authors do not incorporate the third dimension of communication into their model directly, but instead, they view communication skills as a facilitating dimension that moves families into different categories of the circumplex model.

The thrust of systems oriented research in adolescent individuation is still largely in the theoretical realms (Reiss, 1971; Stierlin, 1974; Wynne, 1958) and treatment (Ackerman, 1966; Haley, 1980; Madones, 1981; Minuchin, 1974) rather than empirical studies of the developmental process. However, studies have been conducted that show the efficacy of family systems orientations in dealing with adolescent problems (Beal & Duckro, 1977; Breunlin & Bueunlin, 1979; Klien, Alexander, & Parsons, 1977; Ro-trock, Wellisch, & Schoolar, 1977). One result of the research in this area has been to implicate family cohesiveness as a major factor in adolescent individuation.

One such study was designed by Lowe (1982) who examined the types of family patterns that are conducive to high quality parent-adolescent relationships as defined by their communication patterns. Using the hypotheses of Olson's circumplex model, Lowe administered the Family

Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scales (FACES) to 541 Black and Caucasian adolescents. The findings of the study indicate that adolescents reported the highest quality parent adolescent relationship when they perceived their families to be high in cohesion and adaptability. Family cohesion was found to be the stronger of the two variables.

Family cohesion also was found to be a significant factor in a study with female juvenile status offenders. Druckman (1979) used this population to test the circumplex model and found that families with extremely high cohesion scores are more likely to return to court involvement than families with low or moderate cohesion scores. Family adaptability was not significant at any level. Druckman concluded that the circumplex model was only partially supported.

The circumplex model was tested in another study (Russell, 1979) which compared the performance of 31 Catholic families with early or middle adolescent girls on a structured family interaction game (SIMFAM). Data was collected from behavioral observations (the game) and from a self-report questionnaire filled out by the adolescents. Russell found that high functioning families were associated with moderate family cohesion and adaptability and low family functioning was associated with extreme scores on the two dimensions.

Similar findings to Russell's have been reported by Bell (1982) with the families of runaways and by Portner (1981) with nonclinic families. Other studies have found weaker support for the circumplex model, but they have all been concerned with problems with the measuring instruments. Druckman (1979) used an instrument designed for

her study. Other studies have used the FACES but psychometric issues of the instrument have plagued these studies (Alexander, 1982; Bilbro & Dreyer, 1981). In response to these instrument issues, Olson, Russell, and Sprenkle (1984) have redesigned their instrument, now called the FACES-II which is considered to have eliminated some of the psychometric weaknesses of the earlier version.

Adolescent Satisfaction with the Family Cohesive Style

Though the circumplex model of family functioning indicates that a curvilinear relationship exists on the dimensions of cohesion and adaptability, Olson and Wilson (1984) have proposed that it is "...less important where the family is located in the model than how they feel about their levels of cohesion and adaptability" (p. 1). In a study that looked at delinquent behaviors in adolescents, Nye (1958) reported a finding similar to the theoretical position of Olson and Wilson. Nye stated, "...during adolescence juvenile behavior is more closely related to the attitude of the child toward the parent than of the parent toward the child" (p. 76).

Novak and Van der Veen (1970) explored this issue from the perspective of the siblings of emotionally disturbed adolescents: Emotionally disturbed was defined by delinquent or conduct disorders. The authors were concerned with why the family environment producing one disturbed child also produced children who did not similarly act out. They hypothesized that the "...objective presence of a pathogenic family environment may be only as important as the individual's

subjective interpretation of that environment or, more simply, as the particular meaning that it has for him" (p.158).

In their study they asked the adolescents labeled emotionally disturbed, their siblings, and a nonclinic referred population of adolescents to describe their families using the Family Concept Q Sort. Subjects were asked to first sort according to real family concept and then according to ideal family concept. Family satisfaction was defined by the extent to which the real family concept resembled the ideal family concept. The family adjustment or functioning level was defined simply by the score on the real family concept.

The results showed that perceived family satisfaction and adjustment were significantly higher for the siblings and nonclinic adolescents than for the adolescents labeled emotionally disturbed. Van der Veen and Novak (1974) replicated their earlier study on a different population using a family concept questionnaire instead of the Q sort method. The results were the same as the earlier study.

In a previous study, Novak and Van der Veen (1970) analyzed the main content of each of the three groups on their real family concept responses. They found that disturbed adolescents perceived emotional dependence in the family while the siblings saw the family as competent and the nonclinic referred adolescents viewed their families as having good interpersonal relationships. The authors speculated that the siblings of the "disturbed" adolescents stay away from personal involvement and instead orient toward "adequacy and achievement" (p.169).

The work of Novak and Van der Veen supports the theoretical

position of Olson and Wilson (1984) that family satisfaction is a necessary consideration in family systems studies. Therefore, relevant to this study, not only will perceived family cohesion be measured, but also, ideal family cohesion will be assessed in order to measure the degree of family satisfaction from the adolescent's point of view.

Summary

This chapter presented a literature review of the concepts relevant to this study. The chapter began with the concept of autonomy which is seen as a life-long developmental process. Autonomy has been defined by various authors from different perspectives, but, the general definition relevant to this study involves a psychological independence that begins in the adolescent developmental stage. Though autonomy is viewed as a continual process without an endpoint, this process is also considered to have certain tasks that are salient at specific developmental stages. For adolescence, this task is a drive to establish a clear sense of a boundary of the self from the primary caretakers and autonomy is defined in this study by how much that task has been accomplished.

Adolescent development was reviewed with special emphasis on observations from psychodynamic theory, the major theoretical orientation for adolescent development. The review of this stage of development focused on early and middle adolescence. Early adolescence begins the first real break behaviorally from the family while middle adolescence includes adult experiences under family protection.

The chapter then proceeded to describe relevant studies in adolescent autonomy. The trend in these studies was that, despite a behavioral autonomy within the family, adolescents are still emotionally tied to their families. Thus, the degree of adolescent separation and individuation is intimately tied to the degree of family connectedness within the family. Though autonomy is a natural drive, the amount of frustration experienced by adolescents in trying to meet those autonomy needs is related to how much their family impedes or enhances those needs. Adolescent autonomy, then, is a reciprocal process of the family and the adolescent individuating from each other.

This reciprocity within the adolescent's family was explored in the next section of the chapter via models of family systems with special attention on the connectedness or cohesiveness between the members of the family system. The major model used in this study, the circumplex model, proposes that family cohesion is a curvilinear dimension when defined as family functioning. Moderate cohesion (separated, connected) is associated with healthy family functioning and extremes on this cohesion continuum (enmeshed, disengaged) are associated with problem family functioning.

Finally, studies were cited which support the need to consider adolescents' satisfaction with their family's cohesive style. The same family can include adolescents with different feelings and perceptions about their family, and these perceptions can be related to the amount of the adolescent's emotional dependence within the family.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Contained in this chapter is a description of how this study explored the relationship between adolescent autonomy and family cohesion. The sample, research instruments, procedure, and statistical design are discussed.

Subjects

The sample group for this study consisted of volunteers from the 9th and the 12th grades at two rural schools in one Southwestern state. The population was defined as teenager boys and girls in early or middle adolescence within rural settings attending public schools. The entire school population of the two grades served as a pool from which the sample of volunteers was drawn. The procedure of selecting subjects from all rural schools rather than a random sampling of schools constitutes a bias that requires caution in generalizability of results outside of a rural Southwestern state setting.

The sample was largely a homogeneous group with respect to ethnic and cultural factors and included primarily white, protestant, families with some Native American blood though none practicing a Native

American culture. Out of 138 volunteers, only those cases (N = 127) in which all the test items were answered were used in the statistical analyses. The final sample for analyses consisted of 62 boys and 65 girls including 65 freshmen and 62 seniors. The mean age for freshmen was 14.40 years and for seniors was 17.55 years.

Approximately half the sample (49%) consisted of intact two parent families while the other half was composed of other family patterns. The most common family size included two children, with the respondents in the study most often the oldest child. Nearly half the families of the respondents included fathers with some college education and/or mothers with some college education. Business and professional jobs tended to be the dominant occupational areas most often reported for the parents. A total of 35% of the respondents reported that they were currently employed part time.

Instruments

The Psychosocial Maturity Inventory (PSM), was used to measure the degree of adolescent autonomy. The Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scales (FACES-II) was used to assess where adolescents perceive their family's cohesive style (disengaged, separated, connected, enmeshed), where they would ideally like their family's cohesion style to be, and also to assess the degree of satisfaction they have with the family's cohesive style.

Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scales

Family cohesion was measured using the 16 item cohesion subscale of the Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scales (FACES-II) (Olson, Bell, & Portner, 1984). This inventory is self-administered and is scored on a Likert type scaling. The responses include a range of 1 to 5 with 1 equal to almost never and 5 equal to almost always. The final range of an individual score should be between 16 and 80. Each teenager was asked to answer all the items as they would describe the family now. This score provides a measure of perceived family cohesion and is arrived at by the following formula: (a) Subtract the sum of the negative items from the constant 36, and (b) to that figure, add the sum of the positive items and thus, obtain the total cohesion score. The possible cohesion scores range from 16 to 80. The scores on this scale for adolescents are defined in the manual (Olson, Bell, & Portner, 1984) as Disengaged (47.9 or below), Separated (48.0-56.0), Connected (56.1-64), and Enmeshed (64.1 and above).

The FACES-II also measured family satisfaction. Subjects were asked to answer all the items again stating ideally how they would like their family to be. Scoring is accomplished in the same manner. The difference in the two scores (perceived cohesion and ideal cohesion) is a measure of an individual's satisfaction with their family.

There are no family satisfaction norms reported by Olson et al. (1984) in the FACES-II manual. Instead they recommend using results of the sample for determining descriptive statistics for that sample.

Olson et al. (1984) report construct validity for the FACES-II, a

factor analysis in which all cohesion items loaded on one factor with loadings ranging from .34 to .58. Internal consistency (Alpha), is reported as a correlation of .86 to .88 correlation with two samples within a population of 2,412 respondents. Total sample correlation was .87. A test-retest reliability study is reported in the manual and includes university and high school students taking an older version of the FACES-II (50 items instead of 30). Pearson correlation was .83 for cohesion.

Psychosocial Maturity Inventory

Autonomy was measured by the personal adequacy subscale of the Psychosocial Maturity Inventory (PSM) (Greenberger, Josselson, Knerr, & Knerr, 1975). This inventory is self-administered. The subscale contains 30 items answered on a 4 point scale with 4 equal to strongly agree, 3 equal to agree slightly, 2 equal to disagree slightly, and 1 equal to strongly disagree. Form D, used in this study, is a shortened version with high correlations with the longer version, Form B. Greenberger et al. (1975) report correlations from .86 to .91 between both forms administered among grades 5 through 12. The items for grade 9 differ slightly from those for grade 12.

Hierarchical factor analysis performed on items of the PSM using an 11th grade sample from South Carolina (Greenberger et al., 1974) indicated that autonomy, as defined by subscales called self-reliance, identity, and work orientation, emerged as a single higher order

factor. A principle components analysis performed on the subtests of the PSM gave loadings on the autonomy subscales from .66 to .84 on a single factor using a South Carolina sample of 2291 children in grades 5, 8, 11.

Several studies have investigated the discriminate validity of the PSM. Greenberger and Sorenson (1974) explored the relationship of the PSM to social desirability as measured by the Crown-Marlow social desirability scale. The result indicated that the scores are not affected by the tendency to report favorably about oneself. Greenberger et al. (1975), found that PSM scores rise significantly between grades 5 through 11. While social desirability scores significantly declined, Greenberger et al. (1975) explored the relationship of verbal achievement to PSM scores and found a low correlation of 0.18.

One study of concurrent validity reported by Josselson, Greenberger, and McConochie (1975a) used teacher ratings to rank students according to behaviors defined by traits representing the subscales of the PSM. Using 11th graders, reports that those students ranked high on self-reliance and work orientation were also significantly higher on the subscales of the PSM than those not rated high by their teachers.

Josselen, Greenberger, and McConochie (1975b) hypothesized that the autonomy subscales would be positively associated with self-esteem on the Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale and negatively related to anxiety on the Welsh's Scale. With 192 11th graders, they found significant relationships in the predicted directions. Greenberger (1974) concluded

that the data provides "...convincing evidence of construct validity for the Autonomy scales" (p. 136-137).

Procedure

Two rural schools (with approximately 300 students in grades 9 through 12) were selected in a single county of one Southwestern state to participate in the present study. All the freshmen and senior English classes were given a short presentation regarding the study. The introduction and instructions used with each classroom administration are found in Appendix A.

Two packets were handed out to all the students to return the next day. One packet contained the inventories (see Appendices B and C for the autonomy scale and Appendix D for the cohesion scales) and the demographic sheet (see Appendix E). The other contained the letter explaining the study (see Appendix F) and the parent signature sheet (see Appendix G). Anonymity was stressed and the students were instructed not to place their names on the inventory packet. The inventory packet and the parent permission form were placed in separate boxes in the classroom and picked up by the researcher.

Research Design

This study used a cross-sectional developmental research design. Such a design made predictions based on utilizing individuals at different developmental stages rather than following the same

individuals as they progress through developmental stages. A limitation with this design is that predicting autonomy scores between the different age groups may be affected by artifacts in the sampling process rather than by the independent variables of interest. The advantage of this design is that developmental concepts can be explored in a shorter time and in a more efficient manner.

Statistical Design

The study is designed to examine the relationship between adolescent autonomy development and the style of family cohesion in which that autonomy develops. Family cohesion, however, as defined in the present study is examined from three perspectives. These perspectives include the adolescent's perception of the family style (perceived cohesion), the adolescent's preferred family style (ideal cohesion), and the satisfaction the adolescent has with the family's current style (cohesion satisfaction).

A stepwise multiple regression analysis was chosen for the major statistical design because of the following advantages: (a) All the variables of interest could be included in one design, (b) the stepwise procedure allows for ordering the variables entered into the regression equation according to the saliency of each variable's contribution to the regression equation, and thus, (c) beyond a simple correlational relationship, the multiple regression design allows for more information about the relationship between and among the independent and dependent variables. The autonomy scores make up the dependent

variable while the three cohesion scores and sex and age (represented by high school classes) make up the independent or predictor variables.

In addition to the major hypothesis (hypothesis 1), the other hypotheses (hypotheses 2 through 5) were examined as to the effects of sex and age (represented by high school classes) on the autonomy and each of the cohesion variables. This statistical design was a two-way analysis of variance for each hypothesis using sex and class as the independent variables.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Included in this chapter are the findings organized according to each of the five hypotheses. These findings include a description of the data collected as well as the statistical results.

For all two-way ANOVA's the inventory results of three female freshmen were randomly discarded in order to maintain equal n's of 31 in each cell (N = 124). The entire sample except for one outlier was used for the multiple regression equation (N = 126). Two tailed tests were used in all analyses. Descriptive statistics of the data is provided in Table 1. Figure 1 illustrates the family cohesion continuum with the cutoff scores according to the FACES-II manual and displays the distribution of scores for Perceived Cohesion by sex and high school class.

Autonomy and its Predictor Variables

Hypothesis 1. Mean autonomy scores of those in the early stage of adolescence (high school freshmen) and those in middle adolescence (high school seniors) will vary inversely with the degree of family cohesion.

Table 1

Mean Scores of Autonomy, Perceived Cohesion, Ideal Cohesion, and Cohesion Satisfaction as a Function of Sex and Class

	Autonomy		Perceived Cohesion		Ideal Cohesion		Cohesion Satisfaction	
	X	SD	X	SD	X	SD	X	SD
Sex								
Boys n=62	7.78	1.06	56.44	8.05	63.95	5.87	9.26	6.97
Girls n=65	8.95	1.10	56.68	9.91	64.05	7.33	9.00	7.67
Class								
Freshmen n=65	8.04	1.36	59.48	8.12	63.09	6.56	6.42	4.68
Seniors n=62	8.73	0.95	53.50	8.95	64.95	6.62	11.97	8.45
Total n=127	8.34	1.23	56.56	9.02	64.00	6.63	9.13	7.31
Boys								
Freshmen n=31	7.19	0.98	60.03	7.29	62.55	4.53	5.29	4.23
Seniors n=31	8.37	0.79	52.84	7.21	65.36	6.74	13.23	6.96
Girls								
Freshmen n=34	8.82	1.20	58.97	8.90	63.59	8.02	7.44	4.89
Seniors n=31	9.10	0.97	54.16	10.49	64.55	6.59	10.71	9.67
Total n=127	8.34	1.23	56.56	9.02	64.00	6.63	9.13	7.31

		← COHESION CONTINUUM →			
		DISENGAGED	SEPARATED	CONNECTED	ENMESHED
		I	I	I	I
		48	56	64	
BOYS					
FRESHMEN	0		12	11	8
SENIORS	8		9	12	2
GIRLS					
FRESHMEN	4		6	16	8
SENIORS	9		7	8	7
TOTAL	21		34	47	25

FIGURE 1. Area on the cohesion continuum* for Perceived Cohesion scores as reported by the adolescents in the present study.

* based on cutoff scores according to Olson, Bell, and Portner (1984)

A stepwise multiple regression analysis examining the relationship of cohesion scores (perceived, ideal, satisfaction), sex and class to autonomy scores was run for the total sample. The continuous independent variables included one measure of perceived family cohesion, one measure of ideal family cohesion, one measure of satisfaction with the family's cohesion, and the discrete variables of sex and class. The continuous dependent variable was autonomy scores.

Because of the theoretical concerns for the curvilinear nature of the cohesion instrument, an initial run was performed to examine the assumptions for normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity as well as for outliers. The shape of the scatterplot of the standardized residuals against predicted autonomy scores indicated that the assumption for normality was not violated. The Durban-Watson test (2.08) confirmed that the assumption for normality was met. One outlier (-3.5 SD) also was found on the initial run and discarded. The new run produced another outlier (-3.1 SD), but this case was reasonably close to several other cases within the 3.0 SD criteria and so was retained.

Table 2 provides the results of the regression analysis. The minimum criteria for variables entered into the regression equation was the probability of F at the 0.05 level for the hypothesis that the coefficient of the variable is zero. Maximum criteria for the variable to be removed was the probability of F at the 0.1 level. Table 2 displays the raw score regression coefficients (b), the standardized regression coefficients (B), and the semipartial correlations, R , R and adjusted R .

Table 2.

Stepwise Multiple Regression of Class, Sex, and the Cohesion Variables

Variables in the Equation			
	B	Beta	
sex	1.1836	0.4847	Multiple R = 0.5615**
class	0.7197	0.2947	R squared = 0.3153
			Adjusted
			R squared = 0.3043

** p<0.01

Table 3

Correlation Matrix of Sex, Class, and the Cohesion Variables

	Autonomy	Perceived Cohesion	Ideal Cohesion	Cohesion Satisfaction	Sex	Class
Autonomy	1.000	-0.023	0.138	0.182	0.478	0.284
Perceived Cohesion		1.000	0.365	-0.609	0.013	-0.333
Ideal Cohesion			1.000	0.294	0.007	0.141
Cohesion Satisfaction				1.000	-0.018	0.381
Sex					1.000	-0.023
Class						1.000

As shown in table 2, only the discrete variables of sex and class met the criteria to enter and remain in the regression equation. Family cohesion patterns as measured by the three cohesion variables (perceived, ideal, satisfaction) did not qualify to enter and remain in the equation. R for regression with the variables of sex and class in the equation was significantly different from zero ($F = 28.55, p < 0.01$). Table 3 provides the correlation matrix describing the relationships among the variables and shows sex and class had the highest correlation with autonomy.

Thus, a significant relationship exists between autonomy scores and sex and class such that when the means are examined for autonomy (see table 1) being female and senior is the best predictor of high autonomy scores. The strength of association measure (R) indicates that 31.53% of the variability in autonomy scores was accounted for by the construct of sex and class. The two significant independent variables contribute 23.52%(sex) and 7.81%(class). These results do not support the major hypothesis (hypothesis 1) of this study that family patterns of cohesion would significantly predict autonomy.

The correlation matrix displayed in table 3 includes a significant negative correlation between satisfaction scores and the adolescents' perceptions of their family's cohesion score ($r = -0.609, p < 0.001$). That is, the higher the perceived cohesion score the smaller the gap between the perceived and ideal cohesion scores indicating that the sample group preferred their families to be in the high cohesion area. As shown also on table 3, this result was reasonable considering that perceived cohesion was correlated positively with ideal cohesion. This

result indicates that no matter where the adolescent sample of this study perceived their family's cohesion style, they tended to prefer an even higher (more cohesive) ideal cohesion style.

Sex and Class Differences on Autonomy Scores

Hypothesis 2. Male and female students in the middle adolescent stage of development (seniors) will have a higher mean autonomy score than those in the early stage of adolescent development (freshmen).

A two-way between subjects analysis of variance was used to determine effects of sex and class on the autonomy scores. The two-way interaction effect was significant ($F(1, 120) = 6.985, p < 0.01$). Inspection of figure 2 indicates that the mean autonomy score was higher for seniors than for freshmen ($F(1, 120) = 15.016, p < 0.01$); however, this difference was produced primarily by the boys' scores with little difference on the girls' scores. Figure 2 also illustrates that the means of the girls' autonomy scores were significantly higher than the means of the boys' scores regardless of class ($F(1, 120) = 44.366, p < 0.01$).

Thus, hypothesis 2, that older adolescents (represented by seniors) would have higher autonomy scores than younger adolescents (represented by freshmen), was only partially supported. That is, the hypothesis was confirmed for the boys but there was little apparent difference in the autonomy scores of the girls in the two grades.

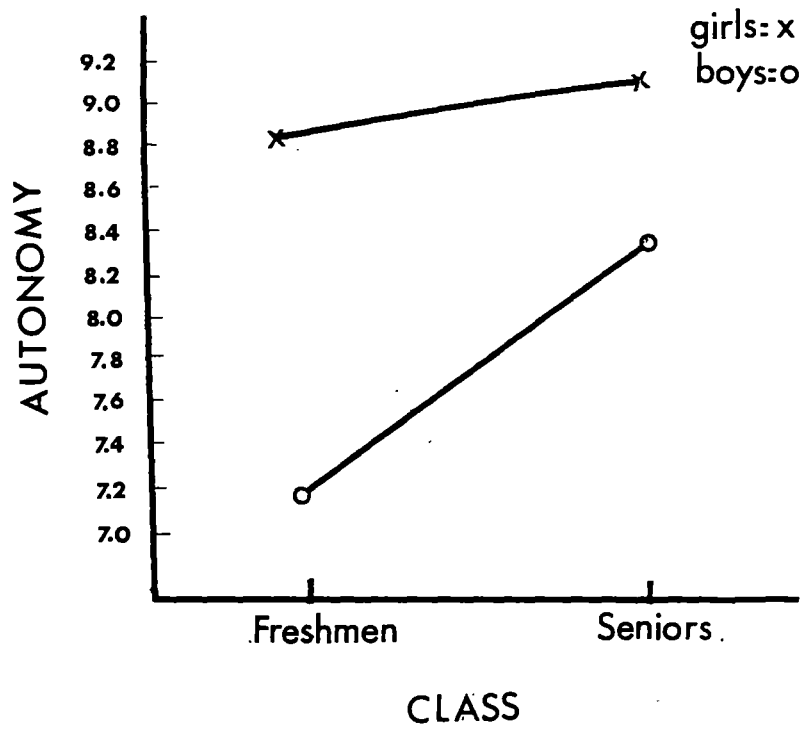


Figure 2. Mean Autonomy scores as a function of sex and high school class.

Sex and Class Differences on Perceived Family Cohesion Scores

Hypothesis 3. Male and female students in the early stage of adolescence (freshmen) will perceive their families as more cohesive than will those in the middle stage of adolescence (seniors).

A two-way between subjects analysis of variance was used to determine the effects of class and sex on the perceived family cohesion scores. Only the main effect for class was significant ($F(1, 120) = 16.458, p < 0.001$). Figure 3 illustrates that freshmen boys and girls perceive their families as more cohesive than do the senior boys and girls. There were no significant differences between the sexes on the perceived cohesion scores.

Thus, hypothesis 2, that seniors and freshmen would differ in the amount of family cohesion they perceive in their families, was supported. That is, the freshmen perceived their families to be more cohesive than the seniors.

Sex and Class Differences on Ideal Family Cohesion Scores

Hypothesis 4. Male and female students in the middle stage of adolescence (seniors) will ideally prefer their families to be less cohesive than those in the early stage of adolescence (freshmen).

A two-way between subjects analysis of variance was used to determine the effects of sex and class on the ideal family cohesion scores. There were no significant interaction or main effects for either sex or class. As figure 4 illustrates the means for ideal

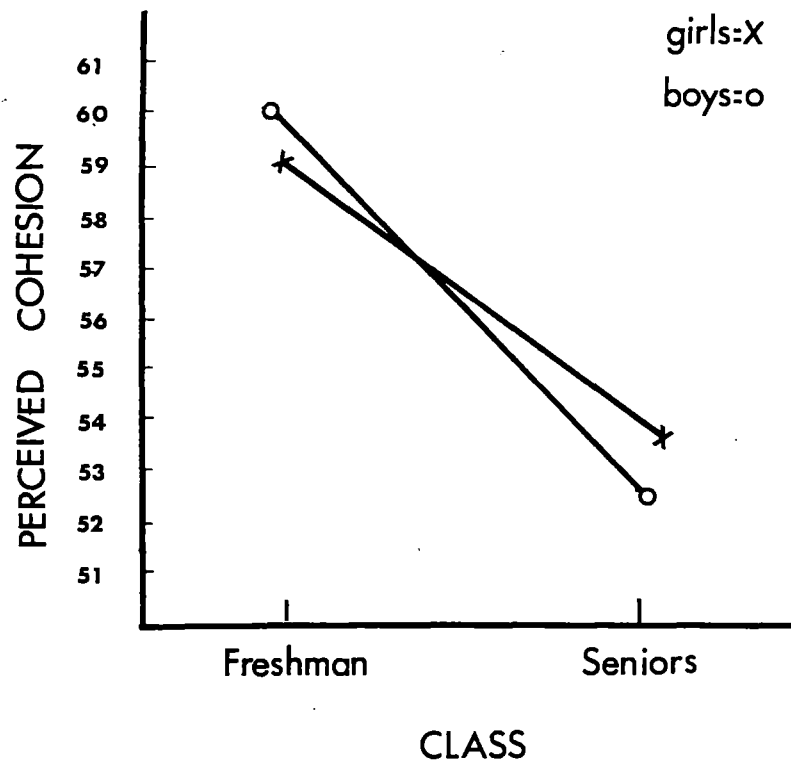


Figure 3. Mean Perceived Cohesion scores as a function of sex and high school class.

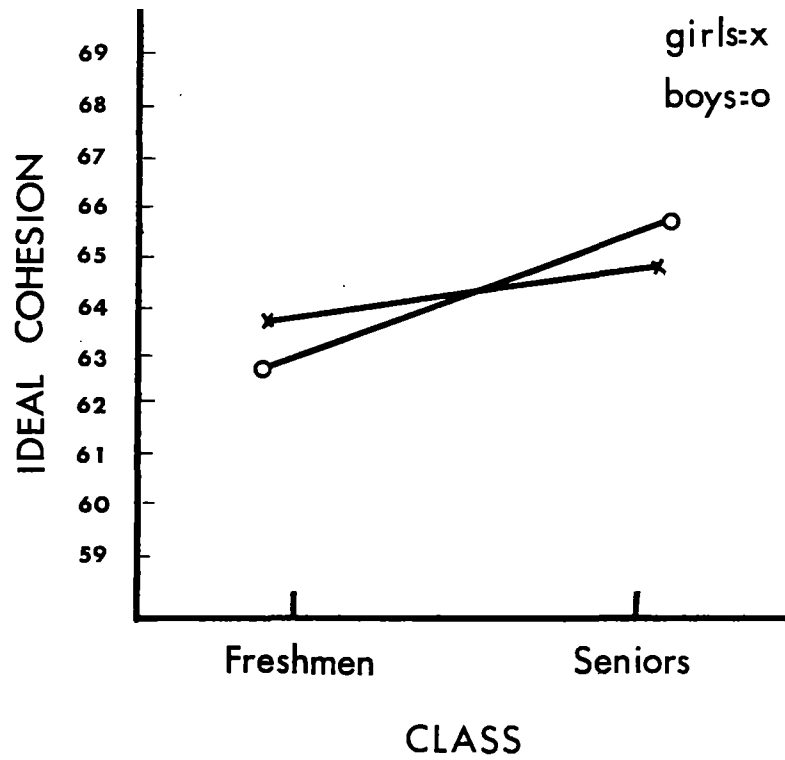


Figure 4. Mean Ideal Cohesion scores as a function of sex and high school class.

family cohesion scores were all at the high (enmeshed) end of the cohesion continuum (see figure 1). These data indicate that freshmen and seniors of both sexes preferred their families to be highly cohesive as measured by the cohesion instrument used in the study. Thus, hypothesis 4, that freshmen and seniors would differ on what they prefer ideally in their family's cohesion style was not supported.

Sex and Class differences on Satisfaction with current family Cohesion

Hypothesis 5. Male and female students in the middle stage of adolescence (seniors) will be less satisfied with their familys' present cohesive style than will those in the early stage of adolescence (freshmen).

A two-way between subjects analysis of variance was used to determine the effects of sex and class on the degree of satisfaction with the family's current cohesiveness. Only the main effect of class was significant ($F(1, 120) = 21.728, p < 0.001$). Inspection of figure 5 indicates that the seniors, regardless of sex, were less satisfied with where they perceived their family cohesion than were the freshmen. Thus, hypothesis 5, that there would be a difference between freshmen and seniors on satisfaction with their family's cohesion, was supported. However, the mean ideal cohesion scores (see figure 1.) indicate that contrary to the theoretical bases of hypothesis 5, the seniors' dissatisfaction was the result of not enough family cohesion rather than too much.

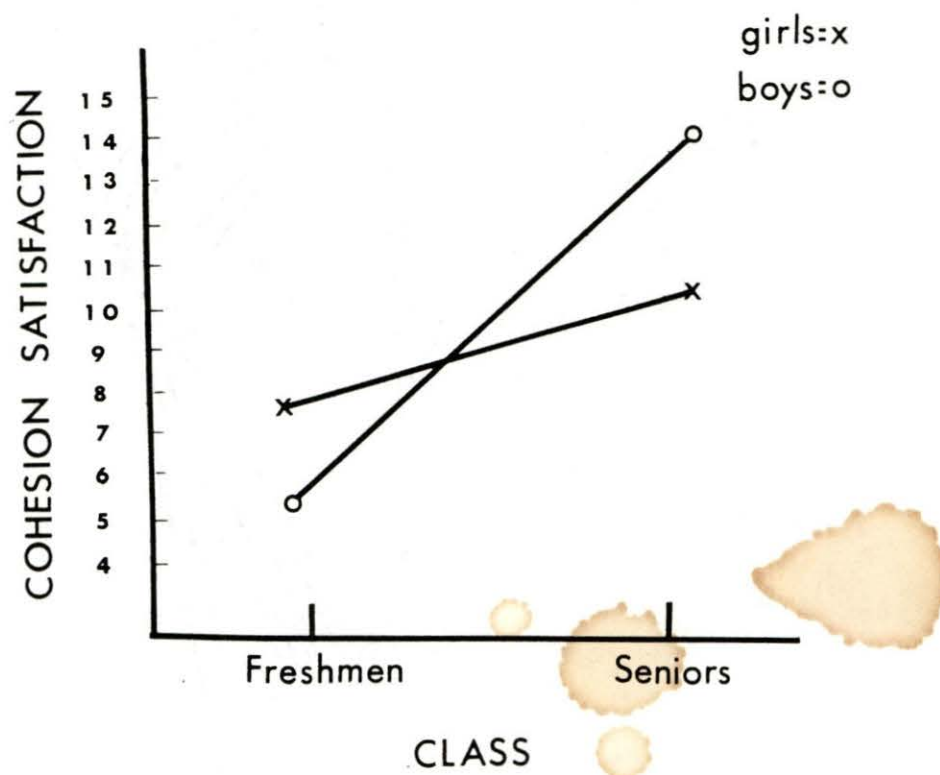


Figure 5. Mean Cohesion Satisfaction scores as a function of sex and high school class.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between a family's style of cohesion or connectedness and the developmental process of adolescent autonomy. A total of 127 rural high school freshmen and seniors of both sexes volunteered to fill out inventories designed to assess their degree of autonomy and their families' cohesion style. Only those test results of students whose parents gave written permission were used in the study. Autonomy was measured by the Psychosocial Maturity Inventory. The Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scales were used to measure the family cohesion style. The family cohesion style was explored from three perspectives; (a) the amount of cohesion the adolescents perceived in their families (perceived cohesion), (b) the amount of cohesion they preferred in their families (ideal cohesion), and (c) the difference between the two cohesion scores which indicated the degree of satisfaction with their family's cohesion style (cohesion satisfaction). The data was analyzed by entering the variables of sex and class and the three variables of cohesion into a stepwise multiple regression equation in order to determine the best predictors of the autonomy scores. Then, the data

was analyzed by a series of ANOVA's to test four hypotheses about sex and class differences in the adolescents' responses for autonomy, perceived cohesion, ideal cohesion, and satisfaction with family cohesion.

Hypothesis 1 stated that mean autonomy scores will vary inversely with the degree of family cohesion. That is, the degree of an adolescent's autonomy could be predicted by knowing the family's amount of cohesiveness, with increasing family cohesion correlating with a decrease in adolescent autonomy. The three variables of cohesion along with sex and high school class were considered in the equation.

The results of the regression equation indicated that class and sex were significant predictors of autonomy scores. Being female and a senior was the best predictor overall. Sex contributed the most to the equation. None of the cohesion variables were significant predictors of autonomy scores.

Hypothesis 2 stated that those students in the middle adolescent stage of development (represented by high school seniors) will have a higher mean autonomy score than those in the early stage of adolescent development (represented by high school freshmen). This hypothesis was only partially supported, that is, it was confirmed for the boys, but there was little apparent difference in the girls' mean autonomy scores across both ages. Not predicted was the significant sex differences in autonomy scores. The senior boys' mean autonomy score was lower than the freshmen girls' mean autonomy score.

Hypothesis 3 stated that those students in the early stage of adolescence would perceive their families as more cohesive than would

those in the middle stage of adolescence. This hypothesis was supported by the results in the present study. There were no significant sex differences in the amount of cohesion the freshmen and seniors perceived in their families. The mean cohesion scores for the freshmen was in the range Olson, Bell, and Portner (1984) defined as a connected style of family cohesion. The seniors' mean cohesion score was less than the freshmen and was in the area defined by Olson, Bell, and Portner as a separated style of family cohesion. Thus, the older adolescents reported a greater freedom from the enmeshment of the family system.

Hypothesis 4 stated that those students in the middle stage of adolescence would ideally prefer their families to be less cohesive than those in the early stage of adolescence. Hypothesis 3 was not supported by the data. There were no sex or age differences in the mean ideal cohesion scores. However, the data was very clear that this sample preferred their families to be in what Olson, Bell, and Portner (1984) described as the border between connected and enmeshed family styles.

Hypothesis 5 stated that those students in the middle stage of adolescence would be less satisfied with their family's present cohesive style than those in the early stage of adolescence. Hypothesis 5 was supported by the data in that seniors would be less satisfied by their family's cohesion style. However, as indicated by the results in hypothesis 4, the seniors' dissatisfaction was in the opposite direction expected. That is, rather than have dissatisfaction because their families were too cohesive, the seniors were dissatisfied

because their families were not cohesive enough.

Conclusions

The following conclusions have been drawn based on the results of this study.

1. Though sex differences on autonomy scores were not clearly predicted by the PSM manual or by published studies using the PSM, Greenberger (1977a) suggested that such differences exist. She had attempted to divide 11th grade students into high and low maturity according to their PSM scores, but she was required to modify the study's methodology because "...the highest scorers were greatly over represented by girls while the lowest scorers were almost all boys." (p. 27).

The sex differences on autonomy scores found in the present study support the conclusion of Montemayer (1982) who looked at adolescents' time with their parents. Based on his results he suggested that "...males and females follow very different developmental pathways in the process of separating from their parents and developing an independent identity (p. 1517).

2. From the findings on hypothesis 2, there appears to be some support for the development of families toward a less enmeshed cohesive style as their children develop in adolescence, at least in the perceptions of the adolescents. That is, as teenagers progress from

early to middle adolescence they view their families as less cohesive. However, it is not clear from the data if this family movement away from a tight emotional bonding is the result of the family's development. Instead, this perception may reflect the older adolescents' feelings of isolation as they move increasingly further into an adult world.

3. The results of the study tend to suggest that there is an optimum or ideal family cohesion style which middle stage as well as early stage adolescents appear to prefer in their families. That is, both stages of adolescence preferred an enmeshed style. Since the families of the middle stage adolescents were perceived to be farther from this ideal cohesion style, these adolescents indicated the most dissatisfaction with their families' style. It appears that the middle adolescents in the study wanted more involvement in their families than they feel they had.

This preference for more rather than less cohesion is, at first thought, antithetical to the definition of the autonomy process. That is, the need to clarify one's boundaries from the childhood caretakers necessitates emerging from the childhood enmeshment of the family system. Therefore, either the definitions of autonomy and /or cohesion need to be reevaluated or methodological limitations in the present study confounded the results.

A methodological limitation is that the family cohesion styles are reported by the adolescents in the sample and are not based on observed data or even by a consensus of all the family members of each family system. This raises a significant developmental question. The data

does not clearly indicate whether adolescents' responses in the present study reflect a developmental phenomenon of feeling farther from the family system because they are becoming more autonomous, or whether the families are developing toward a less cohesive style in an effort to accommodate the adolescent? To explore that question, it would be helpful to understand how the adolescents viewed the items used to define cohesion in the present study.

A subjective attempt to understand what the teenagers were saying was conducted by the researcher as a pilot study with ten high school students. They were given the cohesion scale and questioned by the researcher about their answers. Three themes emerged from this small sample including (a) a desire for more emotional closeness among all the family members, but (b) more intellectual freedom and personal space, and (c) acceptance as a family member despite minor deviances from family values. The teenagers in this pilot study wanted to be active members of their families and they saw the items on the cohesion scale as desirable traits for families to have.

Another question raised by the adolescents' preference for a high family cohesion style concerns whether or not adolescents regret feeling farther from their families as they become more autonomous. Developmental theorists define autonomy as a separation/individuation process, but they are usually quick to caution that there is still an emotional dependence despite the boundary clarification (Josselson, 1980). Personal clarification of oneself as a separate individual does not necessarily imply a severance of the commitment to the family system. The family-of-origin is the strongest system a person will

ever belong to in the entire life cycle (Bowen, 1978) and the power of that system is an every day acknowledgement by adolescents. The concept of this continual commitment to the family system is beginning to emerge from the literature. For example, in a series of studies designed to examine the relationships of teenagers and their parents Youniss and Smollar (1985) concluded:

The awareness by adolescents of their childhood dependence on the parental relationship leads not to detachment but to a transformation that allows the relationship to be retained. Adolescents are given, or take, greater responsibility for themselves but still seek the endorsement of their parents. One reason parents retain, and are granted, authority is that the stakes for adolescents are higher as adolescents move closer to adulthood. Parents raise their expectations, and adolescents seem to sense that they need their parents' guidance even more as they come closer to adulthood (p. 163).

The findings in the present study appear to be additional support for the emotional need for the family system in the life of teenagers in middle as well as the early stages of adolescence regardless of their extent of autonomy.

4. Sex and class appear to be significant predictors of autonomy. Being senior and female appears to be the best predictor overall. The results of the regression equation seem to suggest also that where the adolescents perceived their family's cohesion style made little difference on their degree of autonomy. Neither did the degree of satisfaction make a significant contribution to their degree of

autonomy.

Theoretically, the adolescents' perception of their family cohesion style was expected to be a significant contributor to predicting the adolescents' degree of autonomy. The self-reports of the adolescents may have been an inaccurate estimate of the actual family style, but the current study cannot address if the actual family cohesion styles would have made a difference in contributing to the prediction of the autonomy scores. Furthermore, the methodology of the present study cannot answer the question regarding whether satisfaction with the family style is an important factor. It may be that the adolescent's satisfaction is not related to his or her ability to work through autonomy issues, and only the actual family cohesion style is a factor.

A threat to the internal validity of the current study that may have confounded the results is the instrument used to assess the family cohesion style. The 16 item questionnaire may not be sensitive to the difference between healthy versus dysfunctional family enmeshment. The sample in the present study may have viewed enmeshment as measured by the instrument as healthy and as increased involvement with the family at a more adult level. They did not seem to view the instrument as measuring the cohesive style of a dependent, highly bounded family system.

Preto and Travis (1985) describe a healthy enmeshment as a system with tight boundaries that are permeable and they state:

Increased permeability of that boundary permits the adolescent to form more significant relationships outside

the family, while basically retaining family membership (p. 27). From this healthy view, a highly cohesive style would enable rather than inhibit adolescents to proceed through autonomy issues in a more functional manner. Adolescents in the present study, then, may be intuitively sensing that the family is not only a powerful system, but the family also should be an emotionally safe place to develop within instead of away from. Thus, this study's initial question regarding a relationship between family patterns of cohesion and adolescents' autonomy development appears to be more complicated than a simple correlational study can answer.

Recommendations for Future Research

The following recommendations were generated from the study.

1. Future studies in the area of the family cohesion style's relationship to adolescent autonomy need to assess more systematically the family's actual cohesion style to determine if actual versus perceived styles make a difference in autonomy development.

2. Future research in the relationship of family patterns and adolescent autonomy needs to include a more intricate exploration of the family cohesive pattern such as the parent "missions" described by Stierlin (1974).

3. Research is needed for a better understanding of the existence of sex differences in adolescent autonomy, and, if such differences do exist, how the paths of development diverge.

4. Family cohesion styles need further refinement in defining and

measuring the concept. This study indicates that family enmeshment can be a desirable value, but the literature does not appear to include adequate ways of measuring the difference between healthy and dysfunctional family enmeshment.

Recommendations for Counseling Practice

Some practical implications from the findings of the present study include three major concerns.

1. Studies in adolescent development can benefit from asking adolescents their opinions instead of just relying on the observations and interpretations of the theorists and researchers alone. In this study, the variables of ideal cohesion and cohesion satisfaction gave a greater qualitative dimension to the concept of family cohesion than measurements of the actual family cohesion style alone could have produced.

2. Developmental studies and treatment modalities with adolescents need to consider that issues of autonomy may proceed differently in boys and girls. Too often, both these areas deal with autonomy as if boys and girls were dealing with similar developmental issues at similar developmental stages.

3. The sample in the present study strongly indicated their preference for a close family system. This preference may support Breunlin and Breunlin's (1979) contention that family therapy for adolescents should not be just another therapy method, but a whole orientation toward thinking about and treating adolescents.

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APPENDIXES



APPENDIX A

INTRODUCTION OF THE STUDY TO THE PARTICIPANTS

The following introduction was used in all the freshmen and senior English classes.

We are very interested in how teenagers see their families. For example, often parents do not understand your feelings and needs, and this is normal in all families. We would like to have some ideas from your point of view about what it is like to be a teenager in today's family. Your information will help many teenagers who have a lot of difficulty with their families.

We want to stress that because no names go on these papers and the papers will be mixed up, what you answer will be completely confidential. Also, the choice to participate is up to you and your parents and your choice will not effect your grade this class either way.

At this point, the instructions for taking the inventories were given. Only questions relating to the instructions will be answered.

APPENDIX B
PSYCHOSOCIAL MATURITY INVENTORY
(PSM)
9 TH GRADE

APPENDIX C
PSYCHOSOCIAL MATURITY INVENTORY
(PSM)
11 TH GRADE

APPENDIX D
FAMILY ADAPTATION AND COHESION EVALUATION SCALES
(FACES-II)

APPENDIX E
DEMOGRAPHIC SHEET

ID #-----

Please fill out the following information about you and your family. Remember not to put your name on this sheet. Any information you give will not be given to any school member; nor will the researchers know who the information belongs to.

Date of Birth

sex

Circle one answer that best describes the family you are now living in.

- A. real father & real mother
- B. real father & stepmother
- C. stepfather & real mother
- D. real father only
- E. real mother only
- F. real father & live-in girlfriend
- G. real mother & live-in boyfriend
- H. foster home
- I. other (describe)

Circle number of children in the family

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

Beginning with 1 standing for the oldest child circle the number that fits you in your family at home.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

Father's education (circle highest grade)

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

College 1 2 3 4

Technical School 1 2 3 4

Father's occupation (circle one)

none factory farm business professional

Mother's education (circle highest grade)

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

College 1 2 3 4

Technical School 1 2 3 4

Mother's occupation (circle one)

none factory farm housewife business professional

Do you now have a job? yes _____ no _____

If "yes" does it pay you money? yes _____ no _____

APPENDIX F

LETTER TO PARENTS OF THE STUDY'S PARTICIPANTS

August 26, 1985

Dear parents,

I am a doctoral student at Oklahoma State University and I am specializing in teenage psychology. I have completed my studies for the Ph.D. degree, but I must complete a research study before I graduate.

I have chosen to study what is often called the "generation gap" between teenagers and adults. I have narrowed the study to asking how teenagers view families. For example, often teenagers do not understand the needs all families have and parents often find it difficult to understand the moods and needs of their teenagers.

I would like to have some ideas from the teenager's point of view about what it is like to be a young person in today's family. It is important to have information from normal everyday families like your own. This information can help us to come up with ideas that can help many young people and their families who are having difficulties.

I plan to give 3 very short questionnaires to the students in the 9th and 12th grades. They involve general questions and are not intended to be personal. Typical of the answers to the questions is one of the following for each question:

"almost never, once in a while, sometimes, frequently, and, almost never"

There will also be a general information sheet that gives a description of each family as to size and occupation.

Though I am only interested in the overall attitudes and opinions of teenagers, I have carefully designed this study so that all information will be confidential and no names are put on the questionnaires. In fact once the papers are collected, they are mixed up and there is no way to determine who answered what.

I also wish to inform you that I am doing my study at the school because this is the easiest way to obtain a large number of everyday teenagers. The school officials have consented to this arrangement provided I have obtained your permission. Therefore, I would be grateful if you would sign the enclosed permission form and send it with your student tomorrow to school. However, there is no obligation and your student's grades are entirely unaffected by your choice.

Thankyou very much for your help with my project. Please feel free to call me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Alan Dibble (Tel xxx-xxxx)

APPENDIX G
PARENTAL CONSENT FORM

PARENTAL CONSENT FOR A MINOR'S PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH

Student's name _____

We, parents or guardians of the above minor volunteer, agree to the participation of the above minor in the research project as stated in the letter included with this form. We have been informed of the need for research, the benefits, and the fact that there are no potential risks to be expected. We are also aware that we, or the above minor by his or her own choice, may withdraw from participation at any time. We have also been informed that the research can best be conducted only by obtaining the opinions of minors.

Being aware of the value of the participation of minors in this research project, we consent to the minor's participation.

Signature of parents or guardians_____
Signature of minor

2
VITA

Dion Alan Dibble

Candidate for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Thesis: FAMILY COHESION AND THE DEGREE OF AUTONOMY IN EARLY AND MIDDLE ADOLESCENCE

Major Field: Applied Behavioral Studies with specialization in Counseling Psychology

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Lima, Ohio, July, 6, 1947, the son of Lowell and Margaret Dibble.

Education: Received Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology with minors in Biology and Chemistry from the University of Texas at Arlington in 1973; received Master of Arts degree in Clinical Psychology from Stephen F. Austin State University in 1979; completed requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree at Oklahoma State University in July, 1986.

Professional Experiences: Master's level Psychologist, Leflore County Guidance Center, 1979-1983; Adolescent and family Therapist, Payne County Youth Services, 1984-1985; Marriage and Family Therapist, Oklahoma State University Marriage and Family Clinic, 1984-1985; Predoctoral Psychology Intern, Salt Lake County Mental Health in Utah, 1985-1986.